

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AR

SUBJECT: U.S. RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA

1. ON JULY 17 SECRETARY VANCE RECEIVED FOLLOWING  
LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BROWN:

QUOTE: DEAR CY: I AM FORWARDING FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION  
A LETTER JUST RECEIVED BY DAVE JONES FROM GENERAL AGOSTI,  
AIR FORCE MEMBER FOR THE RULING JUNTA IN ARGENTINA. I  
THINK IT BEARS CAREFUL READING, BECAUSE IT CONSTI-  
TUTES THE CLEAREST STATEMENT WE HAVE SEEN FROM THE  
ARGENTINE LEADERSHIP ON A NUMBER OF POINTS.

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AGOSTI AS AIR FORCE COMMANDER POINTS OUT THE PRACTICAL  
CONSIDERATION OF KEEPING HIS FORCE OPERATIONALLY  
READY. CLEARLY HE PREFERS THE U.S. AS THE PRIME  
SOURCE. AGOSTI AS JUNTA MEMBER POINTS OUT THE  
APPROACHING REQUIREMENT FOR A HARD POLITICAL DECISION  
TO TURN TO EUROPE FOR NEW EQUIPMENT -- A DECISION

WHICH WOULD ALSO INVOLVE CONSIDERABLE MONETARY COST, AS WELL AS DETRACTING FROM OUR OWN

EFFORTS TO REDUCE ARMS TRADE IN THE HEMISPHERE. AGOSTI THE MAN EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN OVER THE CURRENT COURSE OF EVENTS, ENCOURAGING FURTHER DIALOGUE AIMED AT A "NEW CURRENT OF UNDERSTANDING."

IT IS AGOSTI'S CALL FOR FURTHER DIALOGUE WHICH I SEE AS SEEKING AND OFFERING US AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE WHAT WAS STARTED BY THE NEWSOM MISSION, WHICH YOU RECOMMENDED. I THINK THIS IS ENCOURAGING -- IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE MONTES REACTION DESCRIBED IN AMBASSADOR CASTRO'S MESSAGE (BA 5169). CLEARLY AGOSTI REPRESENTS A MODERATE ELEMENT IN THE LEADERSHIP CLOSELY AKIN TO THE APPROACH OF PRESIDENT VIDELA (BA 5209). MY VIEW IS THAT WE SHOULD SEIZE ON THIS OPPORTUNITY AND TRY TO WORK WITH AGOSTI.

FIRST, I RECOMMEND THAT WE RESPOND TO HIM PROMPTLY, REAFFIRMING OUR OWN DEEP CONCERNS AND EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT MUTUAL RESPECT, COMMON INTERESTS AND THE SEARCH FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING WILL LEAD TO EARLY SOLUTIONS. SECOND, I BELIEVE WE MUST BE PREPARED TO ASSURE HIM THAT MEANINGFUL ARGENTINE INITIATIVES, INCLUDING AN OPENING FOR THE IAHRC  
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VISIT, WILL BE RECOGNIZED BY PROMPT AND POSITIVE STEPS ON OUR PART. FINALLY, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD INVITE AGOSTI TO WASHINGTON AND HEAR HIM OUT. GENERAL ALLEN WOULD HOST THE VISIT. CHARLES DUNCAN OR I WOULD FIND TIME TO MEET WITH HIM, AS WOULD DAVE JONES. YOU MIGHT ALSO WISH TO RECEIVE HIM, COUNTERING THE MONTES CHARGE THAT GOA OFFICIALS ARE SLIGHTED IN WASHINGTON.

I HOPE YOU WILL AGREE TO THIS APPROACH, AND WILL SO ADVISE ME AT YOUR VERY EARLIEST CONVENIENCE. I AM AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS THIS FURTHER IF YOU WISH. SINCERELY, HAROLD. END QUOTE.

2. SECRETARY BROWN'S LETTER WAS PROMPTED BY A LETTER FROM GENERAL AGOSTI TO GENERAL DAVID JONES, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.

QUOTE:BUENOS AIRES, JUNE 28, 1978.

DEAR GENERAL JONES:

DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS, I HAVE

CONSIDERED CONVENIENT TO LET YOU KNOW THESE OPINIONS  
ON THE MATTER.

- -

I HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR THIS THE TRUE COM-

MUNICATION THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED IN OUR PREVIOUS  
MEETINGS, IDENTIFIED BY THE TRUE VOCATION CHARACTERISTIC  
OF AN AUTHENTIC MILITARY MAN, AND CONSCIOUS OF OUR  
RESPONSIBILITY ON DECISIONS OF THE OUTMOST (SIC)  
IMPORTANCE FOR OUR COUNTRIES.

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
OUR COUNTRIES IS NOT ENCOURAGING AND IT IS HARD FOR  
ME TO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE POLICY  
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OF THE UNITED STATES TOWARDS ARGENTINA.

IN ALL THE FIELDS IT IS ESSENTIAL TO KNOW WHERE  
OUR FRIENDS AND ENEMIES ARE. ABOVE THE DIFFERENCE IN  
SOME IMPORTANT CASES, MOST OF THE ARGENTINE HAVE  
BELIEVED IN THE FRIENDSHIP OF YOUR COUNTRY, BASED ON  
THE DEFENSE OF MUTUAL VALUES.

BUT BEYOND THOSE CONSIDERATIONS, WE HAVE BELIEVED  
TO FIND THE EXISTENCE OF COMMON INTERESTS ON WHICH WE  
COULD BUILD UP OUR RELATIONSHIP. WE HAVEN'T ASKED  
SPECIAL FAVORS OR CONCESSIONS BUT ONLY TO WORK  
WITHIN A FRAME OF MUTUAL RESPECT.

WE COULD EVEN UNDERSTAND YOUR INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS  
US. BUT WE CANNOT DO IT IN FRONT OF AN ATTITUDE  
THAT SOMETIMES SEEMS HARDER THAN THAT BESTOWED TO  
POTENTIAL ENEMIES.

WE THINK WE ARE REALLY UNDERSTANDING AND READY TO  
EXCHANGE IDEAS. NEVERTHELESS WE CANNOT ACCEPT  
IMPOSITIONS ON DECISIONS THAT ARE ONLY OURS; THAT  
WOULD MEAN TO GIVE UP A PRINCIPLE OF SOVEREIGNTY  
ALWAYS CLAIMED BY OUR COUNTRIES.

THE CONTINUITY OF PRESENT CONDITIONS WILL UNFORTUNATELY  
LEAD TO A RESTATEMENT OF ARGENTINE POSITION TOWARDS  
THE UNITED STATES. ANYHOW, UP TO THIS POINT, THE  
DAMAGE CAUSED TO OUR TRUST IN YOUR COUNTRY WILL BE  
VERY DIFFICULT TO REPAIR.

AS YOU KNOW, DEAR GENERAL, AS MILITARY MEN, WE HAVE  
THE UNAVOIDABLE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING PERMANENTLY  
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PREPARED FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF OUR MISSION.

FOR THAT REASON, IT IS PARTICULARLY SERIOUS NOT TO COUNT TODAY WITH GUARANTIES IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO KEEP IN WORKING CONDITIONS THE MATERIAL ACQUIRED IN THE U.S.

THEREFORE THE AIR FORCE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO NEGLECT IN THE FUTURE THE NEED TO RESORT IN A HIGHER DEGREE TO OTHER SOURCES FOR ITS EQUIPMENT.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE SURGING OF A NEW CURRENT OF UNDERSTANDING THAT WILL STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS.

BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THAT POSSIBILITY, BECAUSE I WISH TO REMAIN CONFIDENT IN THAT RESULT, BECAUSE REASONABLE CONDITIONS ARE GIVEN TO THAT END, IT HAS BEEN MY WISH TO LET YOU KNOW MY CONCERN FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION.

WISHING YOU SUCCESS IN YOUR ARDUOUS FUNCTIONS AND YOUR PERSONAL HAPPINESS, I REMAIN,  
SINCERELY YOURS, GENERAL AGOSTI. END QUOTE.

3. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY VIEWS CONCERNING A POSSIBLE INVITATION TO AGOSTI BY COB FRIDAY. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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